

WASHINGTON (20 Sept.) -- An expansion of facilities and services is well underway for the Tampa VA Medical Center's (VAMC) Outpatient Clinic in Pasco County, Fla., according to an issue brief sent this week by Tampa VAMC Director Stephen M. Lucas to U.S. Rep. Gus M. Bilirakis (R-Fla.).

The document details three areas of progress, including approval for an expansion of the Clinic's current facility and parking; approval to establish an off-site VA Dental Clinic (currently Veterans must travel to Tampa VAMC for their dental care); and approval to expand the Clinic's mental health capabilities (by adding temporary annex space to house services during construction). Director Lucas also notes that plans for construction and the necessary contract bids are already underway.

Pasco VA Clinic Director Duke Miller is pleased with the progress and commented on Congressman Bilirakis's efforts, particularly in terms of his help in enhancing the mental health services. "We are very appreciative of Congressman Bilirakis's concerns and help in expanding the Clinic's mental health capabilities and staff for our veterans," said Miller.

A member of the House Committee on Veterans' Affairs, Congressman Bilirakis has been working closely with federal and local VA officials to improve the services and facilities at the Pasco Clinic.

"I am very pleased at the progress of this Pasco Clinic's expansion of services and facilities," said Rep. Bilirakis who has made this a top priority since coming to Congress in January. "Upon completion, these upgrades will greatly enhance the quality of life for our veterans in need of medical care and meet the needs of a surging veterans' population in this area."

Once completed, the 4,000 sq. ft. Pasco Clinic expansion would allow for an increase in primary care services which has been suppressed due to space limitations.